

WYOMING HIGH DESERT DISTRICT

2015 Operating Plan

High Desert Helibase

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Helitack Supervisor Date

Reviewed by: _____
High Desert FMO Date

Recommended by: _____
Unit Aviation Manager Date

Approved by: _____
State Aviation Manager Date

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

A. Objectives.

1. The intent of this Supplement is to provide guidance and direction concerning local policy and procedures. Material contained herein is supplemental to the following:
 - Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG)
 - Interagency Air Tanker Base Operations Guide (IATBOG)
 - Interagency Airspace Coordination Guide (IACG)
 - Interagency Air Tactical Group Supervisor Guide
 - Interagency Lead Plane Operations Guide (ILOG)
 - Wyoming State Aviation Plan
 - High Desert District Aviation Plan

Multiple copies of this document will be available for distribution and review by all air and flight crews and ground personnel stationed at the Wyoming High Desert District Helibase.

Any deviations from either national agency, interagency, BLM state, or local policies and procedures should be reported immediately to the Unit Aviation Manager or alternate.

2. The intent is also to standardize guidelines and helicopter operational procedures among Wyoming Helibases.

B. Scope. The procedures contained in this Supplement apply to all Helicopter operations conducted by agency Helicopter Crews and Contract/Rental Helicopter Vendors.

C. Review and Revision. Review and/or Revision of this Plan will be accomplished:

1. Every two years at the minimum;
2. When significant changes and/or revisions to the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG) are made;
3. Immediately as the situation may require.

D. Authority. Authority for this Supplement is contained in a master Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement between the United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Wyoming and the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS), Region 2. This supplement is also required by the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG), which is the policy and procedures document for BLM and USFS Helibases.

E. General Information.

1. Responsibilities. The Wyoming High Desert District Helibase is operated solely by the Bureau of Land Management as a government operated base.
2. Location. Wyoming High Desert District Helibase is located at the Rawlins Airport, on the east end of Rawlins; north of Interstate 80 and east of the Highway 287 bypass. The BLM, Rawlins Field Office, Fire Operations and Fire Cache are within one mile of the airport.
3. Period of Operation. The Wyoming High Desert District Helibase is operational from June 01 to October 15.

4. Local Helicopter Organization. The local Wyoming High Desert Helicopter organization consists of:
 - Fire Management Officer – Frank Keeler (BLM, Rock Springs Field Office)
 - Assistant FMO (Operations) – Kevin Cahill (BLM, Rock Springs Field Office)
 - Helicopter Manager – Scott McConchie (BLM, Rawlins Field Office)
 - Assistant Helicopter Manager - Tye Taber (BLM, Rawlins Field Office)

5. Local Fuels and Fire Behavior. Fuels in the Wyoming High Desert District consist mostly of sagebrush, Ponderosa Pine, Lodgepole Pine, Limber Pine, Spruce-Fir, Aspen, Pinyon-Juniper and a variety of annual grasses. Common to the area are afternoon winds of 15-20 mph when combined with relative humidity of 15-20% can cause extreme fire behavior and rapid rates of spread. Many fires in the local area under normal conditions have an 80+ chains rate of spread per hour.

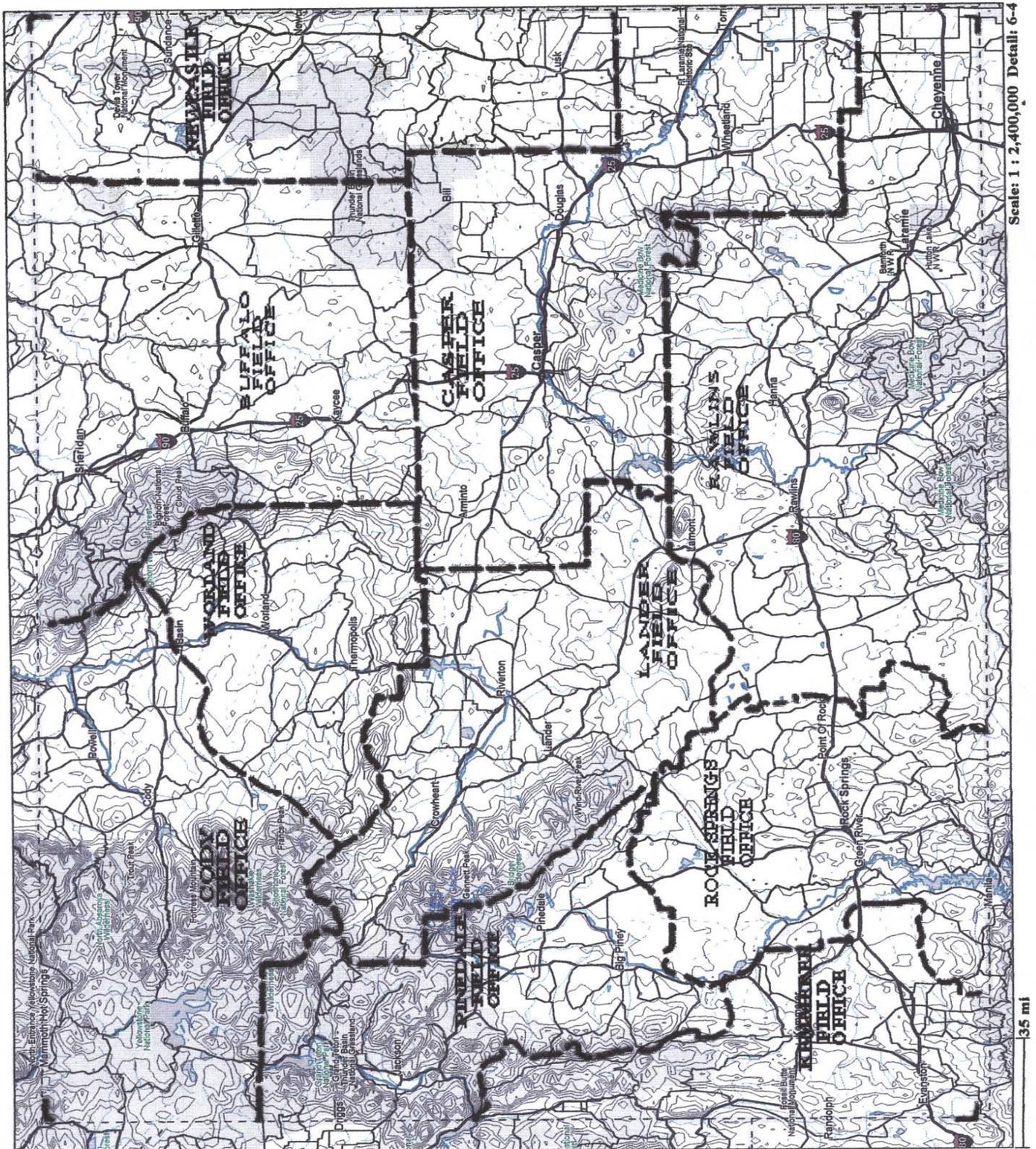
6. Local Flying Conditions. The area is characterized by frequent daily afternoon thunderstorms and lightning activity with predominant winds emanating from the southwest. Strong wind currents are common, along with extreme updraft/down draft action during convective activity. It is also common to encounter turbulence and eddying on the East side of ridges daily. Extremely high density altitudes are common during the summer. Pilots are cautioned not to fly beyond their capabilities or those of their aircraft. Density Altitudes at the Rawlins Helibase in the summer time are typically around 9300’.

7. Landmarks in the Area. (See Map 1 - Rawlins and Local Area)

8. Local Orientation. All Flight and Air Crews will be thoroughly briefed on local landmarks, local fire behavior and weather conditions, and dispatch procedures prior to any dispatch to fire.

WYOMING HIGH DESERT HELIBASE OPERATIONS PLAN | 2015

MAP 1: RAWLINS AND LOCAL AREA



Scale: 1 : 2,400,000 Detail: 6-4

35 mi

CHAPTER II - ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

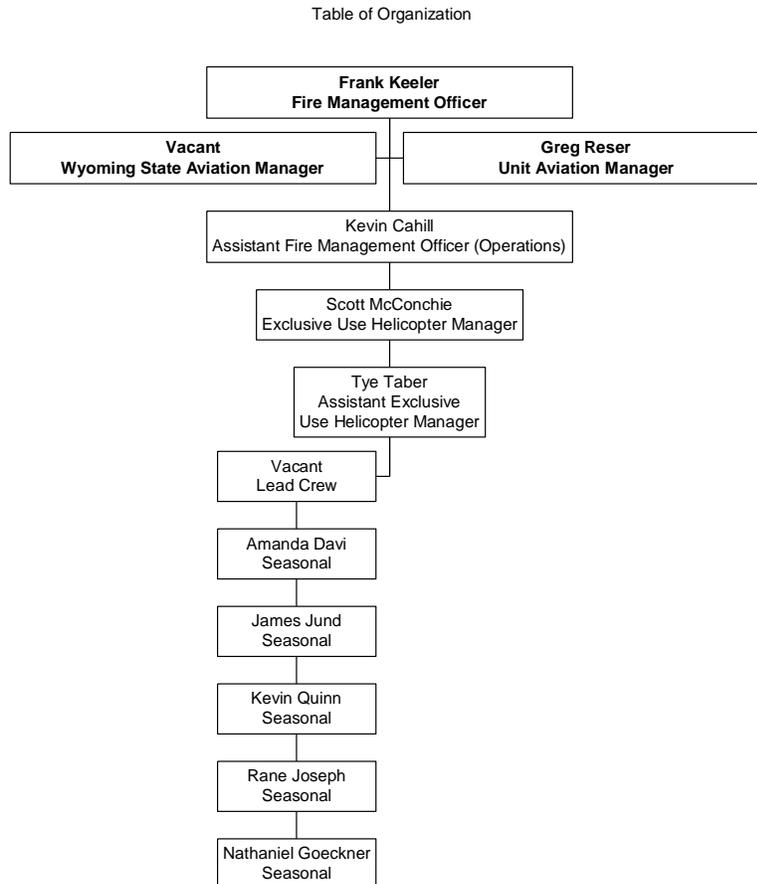
A. Agency Responsibility.

1. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM, Wyoming High Desert District is responsible for furnishing the following:
 - 1 Type III Contract Fire Helicopter (Exclusive Use),
 - 1 Helicopter Manager;
 - 1 Assistant Helicopter Manager;
 - 1 Lead Crewman;
 - 4-6 Helicopter Crew persons;
 - 1 Helicopter Operations Support Vehicle
 - 1 Crew Support Vehicle

B. Personnel

1. General. Each individual working at the Wyoming High Desert Helibase shall receive general training in Helicopter/Helibase Operations and specific training for the position(s) to which each is assigned so as to ensure a safe, effective, and consistent standard for all Helicopter operations. (see IHOG Chapter II).
2. Wyoming High Desert District Helibase: Table of Organization. The duties and responsibilities of the personnel at the Wyoming High Desert Helibase are divided as follows (See Chart 1):
 - a. NOTE: Line of authority between the BLM State Aviation Manager to the High Desert District Fire Management Officer is not supervisory. It is a helicopter contractual relationship only. Supervision of the District Fire Management Officer is provided by the High Desert District Manager.
3. Helibase Personnel: Duties and Responsibilities.
 - a. General. It is realistic to expect that at the Wyoming High Desert District Helibase, one individual may be assigned to more than one position in the base organization. It is the responsibility of BLM, High Desert District to ensure that all personnel are both trained and qualified to fill positions to which they may be assigned (see IHOG Chapter II). Helibase staffing may include all or any of the following positions.
 - Helibase Manager
 - Helitorch Parking Tender
 - Helispot Manager
 - Plastic Sphere Dispenser Operator
 - Deck Coordinator
 - Helitorch Mix Master
 - Parking Tender
 - Load Master (Personnel/Cargo)
 - Takeoff and Landing Coordinator (TOLC)
 - Aircraft Base Radio Operator
 - Aircraft Timekeeper
 - Mix Master
 - Helitorch Manager

CHART 1: WYOMING HIGH DESERT DISTRICT HELIBASE ORGANIZATION



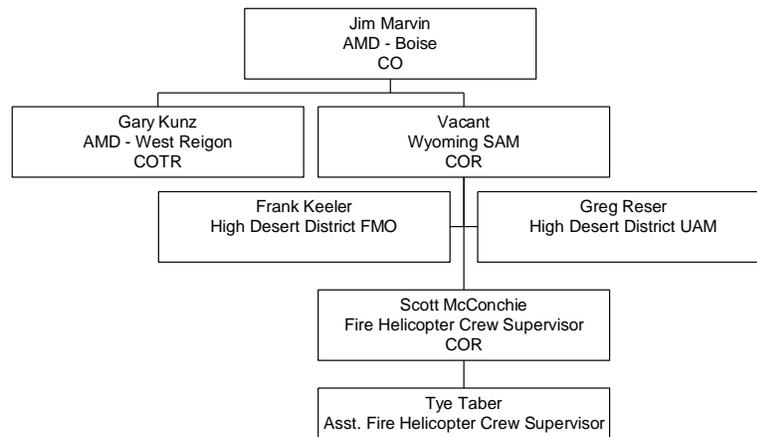
CHAPTER III - FORMS, REPORTS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

- A. Helicopter Management Forms and Reports. All required forms and reports contained in the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG) will be utilized at the Wyoming High Desert Helibase. Local forms, if different from the IHOG will at a minimum meet the required informational needs of IHOG forms.

- B. Helicopter Contract Administration.
 - 1. Contract Administration Structure. (See Chart 2 - Depiction of the contract administration chain-of-command at Wyoming High Desert Helibase.) The Office of Aviation Services (OAS) contracts for all rotor wing aircraft assigned on Exclusive-Use and/or Call-When-Needed contracts to the Wyoming High Desert Helibase. The Contracting Officer at Boise designates both a Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) and a Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR). The Bureau of Land Management or designated representative(s) is responsible for all matters pertaining to helicopters and helicopter contracts.
 - a. The BLM, Wyoming High Desert District Helicopter Manager is the Primary Alternate COR (ACOR).
 - b. Daily contract administration is performed at the Helibase by designated ACOR.
 - 2. Timekeeping Responsibility. It is the responsibility of the Helibase Manager to keep records of all flight and availability times of the Wyoming High Desert District Contract Helicopter, whether at home or at an alternate base.
 - 3. Flight Payment Documents.
 - a. An Aircraft Use Report (AMD-23E) reflecting availability, unavailability, flight time, extended pilot and mechanic/service truck driver hours, service truck miles, per diem and special charges is completed daily. A signed original of the AMD-23E will then be provided to the contractor, at which time it is the responsibility of the contractor to enter the data into the Aircraft Management System (AMS). Copies of all AMD-23Es will be retained at the base.

Scott McConchie, Helicopter Manager
Tye Taber, Asst. Helicopter Manager (When away from base)

CHART 2: CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION CHAIN-OF-COMMAND AT WYOMING HIGH DESERT HELIBASE



4. Transient Aircrews.

- a. When transient aircrews remain overnight, Rawlins Interagency Dispatch Center (RWC) may arrange for transportation and lodging. Lodging and meals will be paid by aircrew members. Rawlins Interagency Dispatch Center will coordinate with aircrews on payment arrangements. Recommended lodging and dining facilities in the Rawlins area are:

LODGING

Quality Inn
Best Western Cottontree Inn
Days Inn
Comfort Inn and Suites

DINING

Cappy's
Anong's
Subway
Square Shooters
Hoot and Howl
Bucks

- b. Contractor aircrew members may be transported in Government vehicles to and from lodging and eating facilities. They may not operate Government vehicles.

5. Availability and Stand-by Requirements.

- a. Pilot Responsibility. Helicopter Pilots and crew are an initial attack crew and are expected to respond in the time frames set down in the helicopter contracts and that are reiterated in the IHOG. Dispatch/Reaction time requirements must meet those specified in the contract, failure to meet dispatch/reaction times will result in unavailability being charged, except as specified in the IHOG and/or the current year helicopter contract.
- b. Helibase Manager Responsibility. The Wyoming High Desert Helibase Manager is responsible for ensuring these requirements are met and for documenting any deficiencies.
- c. Base Availability Period. Regular operating times (base 9-hour availability period) for the helicopter and Pilot operating out of the Wyoming High Desert District Helibase will be 0900-1800. According to fire activity and out of district requests, regular duty hours may be extended before and/or after these times, with payment for extended availability according to contract specifications.
- d. Unavailability. Failure to meet dispatch/reaction times will result in unavailability being charged.
- e. Extended Availability. Paid availability beyond the 9-hour base availability period.

6. Days Off Schedule. Days off for the Wyoming High Desert Contract Primary Helicopter Pilot should be a twelve-on and two-off basis. This will provide for adequate rest of aircrews.
7. Maintenance.
 - a. Maintenance scheduling will be done with as much notice to the Helibase Manager as possible.
 - b. At times it may be necessary for unscheduled maintenance that may or may not involve unavailability at contractor's expense, according to contract specifications.
 - c. Unscheduled maintenance whereby the aircraft is taken out-of-service but still remains available will be requested for approval only by the COR.
 - d. Removal of the aircraft from the operating base for maintenance requires the approval of the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR).

CHAPTER IV - BASE FACILITIES, COMMUNICATIONS, OPERATIONS, AND DISPATCH

A. Facilities.

1. The Wyoming High Desert Helibase is located at the Rawlins Airport. The contract helicopter and helitack crew and support vehicles are stationed at the Wyoming High Desert Helibase. All personnel, including contractors, are required to help maintain the cleanliness of the facilities.

B. Communications.

1. Communications at Wyoming High Desert Helibase by Aircraft. Communications with Wyoming High Desert Helibase should be accomplished on VHF-FM frequency 168.275. Since this frequency is usually line-of-sight limited, any other communications with Rawlins should be accomplished through Rawlins Interagency Dispatch Center (RWC) using VHF-FM frequencies listed in current year **Wyoming Communications Plan - Table 2, Wyoming Interagency VHF-FM Frequency Lists**. Messages can then be passed from Dispatch to the Helibase via landline. In critical cases where immediate communications must be established, the National Flight Following frequency of 168.650 may be used. However, use of this frequency should be strictly controlled and limited, due to possible interference with nearby air operations.
2. Communications with the Rawlins Interagency Dispatch Center (RWC). Dispatch may be reached on any of the Rawlins Interagency Dispatch Center Frequencies listed in current year **Wyoming Aviation Communications Plan - Table 2, Wyoming Interagency VHF-FM Frequency Lists**. The following agencies are represented at:
 - BLM, Rawlins Field Office
 - BLM, Rock Springs Field Office
 - BLM, Pinedale Field Office
 - BLM, Kemmerer Field Office
3. Airport Advisories. Unicom frequency for the Rawlins Airport is VHF-AM 123.000
4. Air-To-Air Air Tactical Communications. Air-to-air communications frequencies are assigned in two ways:
 - a. By RWC upon dispatch of or request for aircraft resources.
 - b. By the Air Tactical Group Supervisor, who will evaluate multiple-fire situations and adjust VHF-AM frequencies assigned by RIDC accordingly. It is critical that any frequency changes be communicated to all involved.

C. Operations

1. Environmental Considerations.

- a. Local environmentally-sensitive areas will be marked on hazard maps. Pilots should be familiar with these locations. Dispatch maintains all land status and may be consulted if in doubt.

2. Parking Procedures. (See Figure 2 -Wyoming High Desert District Helibase Ramp Configuration).

- a. In the immediate vicinity of the Wyoming High Desert Helibase, Rawlins airport can handle up to two (2) light Type III helicopters. There are additional parking spaces elsewhere.
- b. Request for parking will be made on 123.0 (Unicom).
- c. Loading and parking areas are marked in yellow paint.
- d. Only a qualified Parking Tender may park and release helicopters. The Parking Tender will use appropriate hand signals (See Figure 8 - Helicopter Operations Hand Signals).
- e. For departure contact UNICOM 123.0 for Airport Advisory.

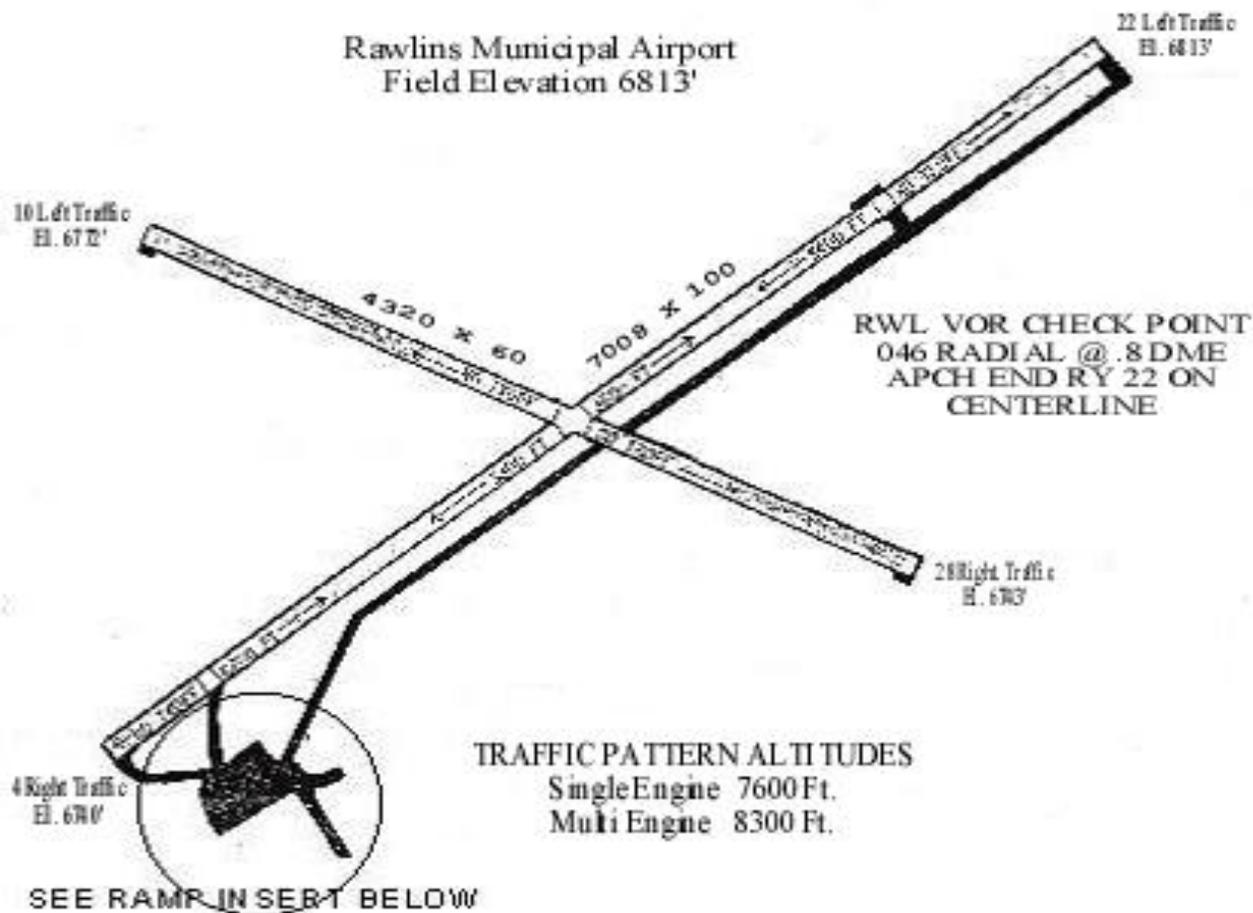
2. Fueling Operations.

- a. Fueling service is provided at the Wyoming High Desert Helibase via either the Contract Helicopter Fueler or the local airport fuel vendor. Fuel includes Jet A.

- Rawlins Carbon County Airport (307) 324-2361

- b. Fueling is the responsibility of the Pilot of the helicopter. It is the responsibility of the Helibase Manager to see that Aviation Fuel Handling requirements (see DOI/OAS Handbook) are adhered to by vendors.
- c. No smoking signs are clearly posted that prohibit smoking within 50' of the aircraft.
- d. Fire extinguishers are provided at each pad
- e. Fueling operations should be discontinued during lightning activity occurring within the vicinity of the base.
- f. Rapid/Splash refueling is allowed under the current Wyoming High Desert Fire Helicopter contract.

Figure 1: Rawlins Airport and Helibase Location



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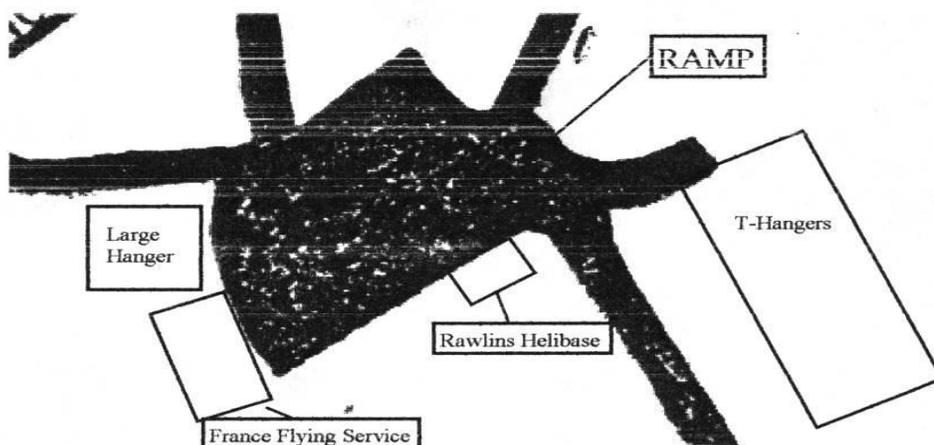
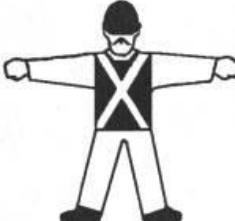
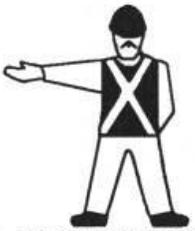


Figure 3: Helicopter Operations Hand Signals

HELICOPTER HAND SIGNALS

 <p>CLEAR TO START ENGINE make a circular motion above head with right arm.</p>	 <p>HOLD ON GROUND extend arms out at 45 thumbs pointing down.</p>	 <p>MOVE UPWARD arms extended swooping up.</p>	 <p>MOVE DOWNWARD arms extended sweeping down.</p>
 <p>HOLD HOVER arms extended with clenched fists.</p>	 <p>CLEAR TO TAKE-OFF extend both arms above head in direction of take-off.</p>	 <p>LAND HERE, MY BACK IS INTO THE WIND extend arms toward landing area with wind at your back.</p>	 <p>MOVE FORWARD extend arms forward and wave helicopter toward you.</p>
 <p>MOVE REARWARD arms extended downward using shoving motion.</p>	 <p>MOVE LEFT right arm horizontal, left arm sweeps over head.</p>	 <p>MOVE RIGHT left arm horizontal, right arm sweeps over head.</p>	 <p>MOVE TAIL ROTOR rotate body with one arm extended.</p>
 <p>SHUT OFF ENGINE cross neck with right hand, palm down.</p>	 <p>FIXED TANK DOORS open arms outward. close arms inward.</p>	 <p>RELEASE SLING LOAD contact left forearm with right hand.</p>	 <p>WAVE OFF DO NOT LAND wave arms from horizontal to crossed overhead.</p>

D. Dispatch Procedures.

1. Briefings and Orientation.

- a. A daily briefing containing local and national information received from dispatch and other sources will be held. The Contract Helicopter at Rawlins is a National resource and it may be subject to call outside the local district. It is important to stay informed concerning conditions and situations around the country. To this end, RWC will maintain aircraft and pilot status¹ for all aviation assets assigned to the RWC area of responsibility; respond to user requests for status of aircraft and/or pilots within 15 minutes; relay initial aircraft status and changes as they occur to local agencies and to the Initial Attack Dispatcher for update of the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) program; relay aircraft status to the Aircraft Dispatcher on duty and/or the Rocky Mountain Coordination Center (RMCC) on a morning and evening basis, and as status changes (Committed, Available, Out-of-Service)

2. Procedures.

- a. Orders are usually received by radio or telephone from the Rawlins Interagency Dispatch Center.
- b. Additional information received can be taken over the Aircraft Radio once the helicopter is airborne.
- c. At times information may be incomplete; however, aircraft can be launched and given the final information while in the air.
- d. It is the responsibility of the Helibase Manager or dispatch to verify location of the incident by checking or plotting coordinates (latitude and longitude). Coordinates are very important since most government aircraft have GPS. Care should be taken to record all the information transmitted by dispatch. If an item is not correct, check with dispatch.
- e. Dispatch is normally called when an aircraft leaves or returns to the base. Estimated times of arrivals (ETA's) are also relayed to dispatch. ETA's are critical information for the Incident Commander and Air Tactical Supervisors working the incident.
- f. It is very helpful if accurate latitude/longitude, along with identifying incident number, is relayed back to dispatch on each initial attack.

¹ It should be recognized that "maintaining status" means that the Dispatcher should be able to tell if an aircraft is Available, Committed, or Unavailable, and be able to contact Pilots immediately. It does not mean that every dispatcher must be able to respond to Flight Requests, plan flights, etc.

3. Communications.

- a. Mutual aid and on-scene frequencies may be used. Dispatch will inform the Helibase of these frequencies.
- b. During large fires to which overhead teams have been assigned, it is the responsibility of the Helibase Manager to obtain a copy of the Incident Air Operations Summary, Incident Map, and Communications Plan. This may be obtained from the team's Air Operations Director.

3. Flight Following.

a. On-District.

(1) Helicopter Tactical Flights. These procedures shall apply to helicopter tactical flights.

(a) Agency Radio Check-Ins. Helicopters are required to check-in with local dispatch every fifteen (15) minutes. If aircraft is on initial attack with no personnel on-scene, then check-in shall be performed with Dispatch.

(b) Air Tactical/Helicopter Coordinator Responsibility. The Air Tactical Group Supervisor or Helicopter Coordinator (if assigned) or the Incident Commander is responsible for relaying arrival and departure times, as well as status (released, available, unavailable, etc.) to the local dispatch with jurisdictional responsibility. This information must be relayed to the Rawlins Helibase as expediently as possible.

(c) Unmanned Fires. If the fire is unmanned at the time of arrival, check-in shall be made by the Helicopter Manager with the local dispatch office upon incident arrival and departure.

(2) Air Tactical Flights. Flight following is mandatory for all helicopter, lead planes and air tactical/recon aircraft.

- b. Off-District. For off district flights, agency flight following with 15 min. check-ins may be utilized or an appropriate flight plan will be filed through FAA, with a phone call back to the originating dispatch office upon arrival at destination.

4. **Airspace Coordination.** All flight crews will be briefed on special procedures concerning airspace coordination as contained in the Interagency Airspace Coordination Guide (IACG). Airspace conflicts with other aircraft are a constant hazard for which Pilots must maintain vigilance.
 - a. Read IACG to gain an understanding of the procedures dispatch will take to coordinate airspace for incidents along Military Training Routes (MTRs) or within Special-Use Airspace (SUA). Rawlins Interagency Dispatch will maintain current copies of DOD Area Planning AP/1B and AP1A Publications. An up-to-date AP/1B Western U.S. Planning Chart will be visibly posted.
 - b. Read IACG for Pilot responsibilities en route and on-scene.
 - c. Ensure that NOAA Aeronautical Sectional (not World Aeronautical Charts) charts for all of Wyoming and adjacent states are on board the aircraft at all times.

Figure 4: Map of Wyoming Military Airspace

Note: Posted in Rawlins Interagency Dispatch Center and Wyoming High Desert District Helibase. Updated as received.

E. Guidelines For Aerial Application of Retardants & Foam Near Aquatic Environments and Waterways.

Definition: *WATERWAY* – Any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life.

Guidelines:

Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of waterways.

These guidelines do not require the Helicopter or Air Tanker pilot-in-command to fly in such a way as to endanger his or her aircraft, other aircraft, or structures or compromise ground personnel safety.

Guidance for pilots: To meet the 300-foot buffer zone guideline, implement the following:

Medium/Heavy Air Tankers: When approaching a waterway visible to the pilot, the pilot shall terminate the application of retardant approximately 300 feet before reaching the waterway. When flying over a waterway, pilots shall wait one second after crossing the far bank or shore of a waterway before applying retardant. Pilots shall make adjustments for airspeed and ambient conditions such as wind to avoid the application of retardant within the 300-foot buffer zone.

Single Engine Air Tankers: When approaching a waterway visible to the pilot, the pilot shall terminate application of retardant or foam approximately 300 feet before reaching the waterway. When flying over a waterway, the pilot shall not begin application of foam or retardant until 300 feet after crossing the far bank or shore. The pilot shall make adjustments for airspeed and ambient conditions such as wind to avoid the application of retardant within the 300-foot buffer zone.

Helicopters: When approaching a waterway visible to the pilot, the pilot shall terminate the application of retardant or foams 300 feet before reaching the waterway. When flying over a waterway, pilots shall wait five seconds after crossing the far bank or shore before applying the retardant or foam. Pilots shall make adjustments for airspeed and ambient conditions such as wind to avoid the application of retardant or foam within the 300-foot buffer zone.

Exceptions:

When alternative line construction tactics are not available due to terrain constraints, congested area, life and property concerns or lack of ground personnel, it is acceptable to anchor the foam or retardant application to the waterway. When anchoring a retardant or foam line to a waterway, use the most accurate method of delivery in order to minimize placement of retardant or foam in the waterway (e.g., a helicopter rather than a heavy air tanker).

Deviations from these guidelines are acceptable when life or property is threatened and the use of retardant or foam can be reasonably expected to alleviate the threat.

When potential damage to natural resources outweighs possible loss of aquatic life, the unit administrator may approve a deviation from these guidelines.

CHAPTER V - SAFETY

- A. Evaluations. Helibase evaluations/reviews will be made bi-annually at Rawlins.
 - 1. Evaluations/reviews will be completed by June 30th.
 - 2. The standard Interagency Helibase Inspection Checklist as contained in the IHOG will be used by the evaluation team.
- B. Aerial Hazard Maps. The Helibase Manager is responsible for ensuring updated Hazard Maps are available. Pilots input of observed hazards will be posted on hazard maps immediately by the base manager.
- C. Aircraft Emergency Response Plan.
 - 1. Aircraft Pre-Accident Plan. Local Incident/Accident Plans will be developed according to the format issued by OAS and displayed at the base. Telephone numbers and contacts and appropriate personnel will be included in the plans.
 - 2. Rawlins. Rawlins City Fire Department and Carbon County FD will respond upon notification of any crash. Their number is 911. They have full crash rescue capabilities.
 - 3. Base Requirements. On-site crash rescue kits, fire extinguishers, first aid kits and burn kits are available and clearly marked at the base. All personnel at the base should be familiar and trained in the use of each item.
 - 4. Extinguishers. Base fire extinguishers will be checked prior to the fire season by a qualified person. The District will be responsible for this.
- D. Aircraft Activity Around Rawlins Airport. Rawlins Airport has light aircraft activity, which may create dangerous congestion in the vicinity of the airport. Caution should be exercised while departing and arrival at the base. Contact 123.0 for additional information on aircraft activity.
- E. Incident/Hazard/Maintenance Deficiency Reporting. Follow instructions in the IHOG, with the following additions:
 - 1. All airspace conflicts and maintenance deficiencies must be reported immediately by telephone to both the Zone Aviation Manager and State Office Aviation Manager, with immediate follow up of the written SAFECOM.
 - 2. Other Hazards may be reported within three (3) days through appropriate channels.
 - 3. Pilots are encouraged to utilize the SAFECOM - Aviation Safety Communique concerning operational or procedural hazards observed, either on the ground or in the air, during the course of conducting any air operations.